

SENATE RESOLUTION 203

By Haynes

A RESOLUTION to honor and commend the members of the General Federation of Women's Clubs for their supreme legacy of public service and civic action.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that this General Assembly should pause to pay tribute to those exemplary civic organizations that have contributed significantly to the growth and prosperity of their respective communities and this State and Nation; and

WHEREAS, the General Federation of Women's Clubs (GFWC) is most assuredly one such distinguished organization worthy of special recognition; founded in 1889 by Jane Cunningham Croly, the Federation has made a remarkable impact on this State, our Nation, and the World, with chapters in more than twenty nations; and

WHEREAS, the activities of GFWC have been spread across a wide range of causes; long aware of the importance of maintaining and celebrating our natural environment, GFWC was an important force in founding America's first national parks, with each state federation founding a park, many of which, including Everglades National Park, were donated to the National Park Service and have since been enjoyed by millions of people; and

WHEREAS, in the 1920s, GFWC carried out a campaign to designate official state birds and flowers in each state of the Union; and

WHEREAS, the ladies of GFWC have displayed laudable patriotism through the decades; in 1916, they suggested that special naturalization services be included in Independence Day celebrations, a tradition that endures today; in the 1950s, the Americanism Department of GFWC called for its members to help refurbish Independence Hall, and they responded with the most contributions of any organization; and

WHEREAS, during World War I, GFWC sent an Overseas Service Unit of one hundred young women to Europe to assist wounded soldiers and raised money to purchase Liberty Bonds and support the Red Cross and YMCA; and

WHEREAS, a generation later, these remarkable women answered the call to duty of their country again during World War II by raising money for military planes and providing funds for scholarships and loans to train nurses; more than 6,000 young women were recruited for the Cadet Nurse Corps, and over 4,500 juniors enlisted in the various services established for women; and

WHEREAS, as World War II neared its conclusion in 1945, GFWC played an instrumental role in securing national support for the United Nations and was one of only five women's organizations invited by the U.S. government to send delegates to the United Nations Conference; and

WHEREAS, GFWC is a truly outstanding organization, with a legacy of accomplishments that spans all areas of life; and

WHEREAS, because of its unsurpassed reputation for public service, GFWC is able to represent its members on various Boards of Directors, Advisory Boards, and organizational coalitions, including Keep America Beautiful, Make A Difference Day, Child Labor Coalition, Connect America, Strong Women: Inside and Out, and the National Center on Women and Aging; and

WHEREAS, throughout its history, GFWC has been particularly active in Tennessee, bringing countless benefits to this State; and

WHEREAS, the GFWC Ossoli Circle in Knoxville is a charter club of GFWC International; and

WHEREAS, during the suffrage movement, the members of the Tennessee Federation were at the forefront of the movement to convince Tennessee legislators to ratify the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, giving women nationwide the right to vote; and

WHEREAS, today, 2,500 citizens of Tennessee continue to serve their communities through membership in this fine organization; and

WHEREAS, on April 24, 2004, GFWC members will commemorate their history of faithful and productive public service and their many continuing good works on Federation Day, with the celebration to continue the following week during the 2nd Annual GFWC Volunteers in Action Week, when a special emphasis will be placed upon the prevention of violence against women and children; and

WHEREAS, the outstanding ladies who comprise GFWC continue to dedicate themselves unselfishly, both individually and collectively, to making their respective communities and their World a better place to live; and

WHEREAS, they have achieved great success in this civic arena and should be applauded for their many worthwhile endeavors in service of their friends and neighbors; and

WHEREAS, citizens of their stature do not often walk among us, and the peerless members of GFWC should be recognized for their many good works to promote the public good and to inspire a true sense of civic responsibility among their fellow citizens; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDERED THIRD GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, that we hereby honor the members of the General Federation of Women's Clubs for their meritorious community service, applaud their stalwart dedication to improving the quality of life in their respective communities, and this State, Nation, and World, and extend to them our best wishes for much continued success in their future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.